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Title:

Speech notes for the Speaker of the House of Assembly at Commercial Travellers'
Association Centenary dinner, Adelaide Town Hall

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SPEECH NOTES FOR THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

MR. RYAN, AT COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION CENTENARY

DINNER, ADELAIDE TOWN HALL.

5/4/74.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES (SIR PAUL AND LADY HASLUCK), MR. WHITE,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO
RESPOND TO THE TOAST TO "PARLIAMENT".

I NOTE THAT YOU SELECTED "PARLIAMENT" RATHER THAN
"PARLIAMENTARIANS". YOU DID SO I IMAGINE BECUASE YOU
WANT TO CELEBRATE THE ENDURING INSTITUTION OF PARLIAMENT,
THE FOCUS OF A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

.../2

I'M SURE THAT YOUR CHOICE OF WORDS HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING
TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT FROM YOUR VANTAGE POINT ACROSS
THE ROAD YOU'VE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY OVER THE YEARS TO
BECOME EXCEEDINGLY FAMILIAR WITH THE COMINGS AND GOINGS
OF PARTICULAR MEMBERS!

BUT CERTAINLY TONIGHT I SPEAK IN A NON-PARTISAN SPIRIT.
YOU KNOW, SOMEBODY ONCE SAID THAT DEMOCRACY WAS A VERY,
VERY, BAD FORM OF GOVERNMENT. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT NOBODY
HAD EVER THOUGHT OF A BETTER ONE.

.../3

IT WAS A VERY WISE REMARK. DEMOCRACY, AND THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM WE KNOW WHICH IS ITS FOCUS, WAS A VERY LONG TIME IN COMING AND IT WAS A HARD, BITTER FIGHT IN THE ACHIEVEMENT.

HAVING ACHIEVED IT, WE - THE VOTERS AND THE MEMBERS - FOUND THAT IT WASN'T A PARTICULARLY EFFICIENT SYSTEM. AND THAT IS ITS GREAT STRENGTH. EFFICIENT SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT MAKE THE TRAINS RUN ON TIME - TOO OFTEN AT THE EXPENSE OF PEOPLE'S LIBERTY.

A TRUE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM HAS TO ACCOMMODATE DISSENT, MAKE ROOM FOR GRIEVANCE, PROVIDE FOR COMPROMISE, ALLOW LIBERTY TO FLOURISH. YOU CAN'T HAVE THAT AND SUPER EFFICIENCY TOO AND I'M SURE I SPEAK FOR ALL SOUTH AUSTRALIANS IN SAYING I KNOW WHICH WE PREFER.

.../4

THE OTHER THING ABOUT OUR PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM IS THAT - ALMOST FROM THE TIME WE GOT IT - PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PROPHECYING ITS DECAY OR EVEN WRITING ITS OBITUARY.

THIS IS THE THEORY THAT SAYS THE PARTY SYSTEM OR THE GROWTH OF EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE THE M.P. A CYPHER NEAR LOBBY FODDER.

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT EITHER.

I BELIEVE THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM - INCLUDING THE VARIOUS STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES AS WELL AS FORMAL DEBATES OR QUESTIONS - IS AS STRONG AS EVER.

CERTAINLY THIS IS THE CASE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA WHERE
OUR PARLIAMENT IS AS ENQUIRING, AND VIGOROUS AS ON THE
DAY IT JUST OPENED.

IT'S BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY
SINCE 1959 AND TO OCCUPY THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR SINCE LAST
YEAR.

DURING THAT TIME I'VE WATCHED MOMENTS OF HIGH DRAMA IN
WHICH TIME AND TIME AGAIN THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM HAS
PROVED ITS WORTH TO OUR SOCIETY. I HAVE LISTENED TO A
REMARKABLE DIVERSITY OF REPRESENTATIVE MEN AND WOMEN
MAKING THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO IT. WHEN I FIRST ENTERED
POLITICS I HAD A GREAT RESPECT FOR PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT.

THAT RESPECT IS STILL GREATER TODAY.

THANK YOU.